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Executive Registry

84- 2248

18 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Information Systems Board Members

FROM: [REDACTED]

25X1

Executive Secretary to the Board

SUBJECT: Minutes of 27 April 1984 Meeting of the
Information Systems Board1. The Information Systems Board met on Friday,
27 April 1984. [REDACTED]25X1
25X12. [REDACTED] asked for approval of the revised minutes of
the 22 March meeting which incorporated a change suggested by
[REDACTED] There were no further additions or corrections. [REDACTED]

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3. [REDACTED] briefly summarized the status of the personal
computer requirements study. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] will do
the work. [REDACTED]

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4. At [REDACTED] request, [REDACTED] C/IHG/O/Compt and
Chairman of the Information Services Planning Working Group)
summarized the analysis and four recommendations contained in the
Working Group's "Report on Agency Information Services Planning." As
an example of the need for information services planning, [REDACTED]
described a recent Comptroller's meeting in which several information
handling initiatives for FY 1986 were perceived as redundant.

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[REDACTED] So large a
proportion, he suggested, should warrant better advance planning and
prioritization. Because such planning was not done, the Comptroller

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was asked to take the lead in weeding and prioritizing new initiatives. [redacted]

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5. [redacted] said that the Working Group agreed that a plan was needed to inform Agency decisions about how information handling requirements, options, and projects fit together. The range of planning alternatives discussed ran from the very informal to the highly structured, but in general the Working Group agreed that management had to be involved in Agency-wide planning. He outlined the benefits of planning, including improved guidance to ODP on which of its activities are deemed most crucial and deserve most emphasis. Because the Executive Director is best positioned to resolve priority and resource differences between Directorates, the group felt that he should be the senior responsible officer for Agency-wide planning. Because planning cannot be handled on an ad hoc basis or by "stapling" four Directorate plans together, the Working Group also felt some permanent staff needed to be responsible for the development of an Agency-wide plan. [redacted]

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6. [redacted] quoted several points made [redacted] at the recent IBM Executive Seminar in Williamsburg. [redacted] had warned the seminar attendees to expect a 30 to 300 percent increase in communications costs in 1984. He had suggested that only new management approaches would permit corporations and agencies a measure of control over "technology gone wild:" the explosive growth in workstations, the problems created by the convergence of voice and data communications, and the expanding role of networks. The approaches included merging of telecommunications and data processing, cross-training both data processing and communications personnel, and planning at least three years into the future for data processing and telecommunications.

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7. [redacted] then asked the Board to discuss the Working Group's first three recommendations:

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-- establish the Executive Director as the senior Agency official responsible for information system planning;

-- make the Information Systems Board a permanent group charged with advising the Executive Director, recommending Agency goals and high-level objectives, reviewing the long-range plan, and ensuring that the approach for achieving the Agency's information handling goals is workable; and

-- require the DA, DI, DO, and DS&T to develop directorate information system plans, participate in the formulation of an Agency-wide plan, and provide a single point-of-contact for information systems planning matters. [redacted]

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8. The Board reached consensus quickly on the first recommendation, agreeing that, as CIA Program Manager, the Executive Director was de facto the responsible senior Agency official for all planning, including information services planning. [redacted]

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suggested the recommendation be rewritten to make the Executive Director "senior Agency coordinator of planning." [redacted] 25X1

9. The Board similarly agreed on the second and third recommendations after some discussion and clarification. [redacted] 25X1
asked for opinions on the future of the Information Systems Board, reminding members that much time is spent on Board meetings and the Working Groups' efforts. He also commented that he had heard more favorable than critical comments about the Board's role to date. He noted that the Headquarters Notice establishing the Board had expired. [redacted] 25X1

10. [redacted] remarked that the status of the Board and when it met were entirely up to the Executive Director. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] agreed that the Board was a useful forum for exchanging information and coordinating positions. [redacted] asked what function the Board should serve regarding the question of information systems planning. [redacted] suggested that, most immediately, the Board should review and comment upon the long-range plans prepared by the Directorates. [redacted] concluded the discussion by remarking that the Information Systems Board would be continued until further notice but that he saw no need for another Headquarters notice to that effect. The Board expressed satisfaction with this decision. [redacted] 25X1

11. [redacted] commented on the third recommendation, noting that the requirement for a directorate plan was interesting since, in practice, the offices would have to do the planning. [redacted] commented that the directorate plan may well consist of number of office plans, but that the directorates are the ultimate organization responsible for providing central services and that office plans should be coordinated with each directorate just as directorate plans should be coordinated to produce an Agency-wide plan. [redacted] mentioned that the DS&T already has a long-range information handling plan underway, and most other Board members agreed that their Directorates were prepared to draw up such a plan. [redacted] 25X1

12. [redacted] next asked the Board to discuss the Working Group's fourth recommendation: 25X1

-- to establish a small three to five person staff, reporting to the Executive Director, to develop a planning methodology, integrate the directorate plans into an Agency-wide plan, and evaluate information systems performance against the long-range plan.

[redacted] briefly outlined the history of information systems planning, reminding the Board that the Information Systems Architect's study had recommended a large staff to handle such issues. He noted that his small Planning Staff was formed to advise him on the whole array of complex technical issues confronting the Agency -- including information handling -- and that he was not inclined to increase the size of that Staff despite the recognized need for a single point of 25X1

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coordination, both within the Directorates and at the Agency level. He stated that he needed to study the options available since information systems planning is a serious management problem which obviously is not going away. He rhetorically asked if the Executive Committee should revisit the idea of a fifth directorate -- particularly in the telecommunications context. [redacted] 25X1

13. [redacted] and [redacted] felt that -- given Directorate 25X1 plans -- no staff would be needed since any inconsistencies or conflicts probably could be dealt with on an ad hoc basis before each budget submission is made. [redacted] disagreed, suggesting that the 25X1 resolution of differences is not an easy job when offices and directorates are competing for scarce resources. [redacted] 25X1 complimented the Working Group in laying out all the options but suggested that the crucial point in good planning was not who wrote the plan but that the planning process be synchronized with the budget cycle. [redacted] also opposed a full-time 25X1 planning staff handling the planning function. [redacted] 25X1 suggested that, since technology is changing so rapidly, the Agency should adopt a planning mechanism that is more flexible -- staffs have a tendency to perpetuate themselves and become moribund, he noted. [redacted] agreed that a staff was not the right answer but 25X1 supported the concept of centralized Agency planning accomplished within a fifth directorate. [redacted] agreed that planning had 25X1 be synchronized with the budget cycle and, for that reason, supported placing the function in the Comptroller's office. [redacted] 25X1

14. [redacted] reminded the Board that, following the completion 25X1 of the Architect's report, two positions had been added to the Comptroller's staff [redacted] and one 25X1 position had been added to the Planning Staff [redacted] for 25X1 the purpose of ensuring coordination between information systems planning and the budgeting. He asked whether three people working part-time on planning could do the job. [redacted] 25X1

15. [redacted] suggested that planning be given full-time 25X1 status. Project coordination often occurs only after budget submissions, he said, and by then it is too late to plan coherent strategies and too late for the services of common concern to know what kind of central facilities will be needed. Furthermore, he added, there is some unknown portion of projects that are never surfaced because the various initiatives are not grouped into distinct programs with the overlap between initiatives omitted and the gaps filled. Because of this, he continued, the money spent on separate initiatives may have less impact than it would if initiatives were planned and coordinated. [redacted] commented that a longer-term 25X1 plan is needed so that each manager knows what money must be set aside each year to make the whole system work. The budget process -- and the Comptroller's staff -- cannot make those decisions or weigh the alternatives. [redacted] 25X1

16. [redacted] suggested that, since the Board seemed 25X1 divided on how an Agency-wide plan would be developed, perhaps the directorate plans should be completed first so the Board could review

those and determine what needed to be done, how big the job would be, and what structure would do it. [] stated that the Board had agreed that each directorate would produce plans and tasked the Information Services Planning Working Group to produce, by the end of June, guidelines for the directorate information handling plans. He further commented that he might want to discuss the fourth recommendation with the Deputy Directors before proceeding further.

17. [] closed this portion of the discussion by recounting a few points made by speakers at the IBM Executive Seminar.

[] building bridges between information systems would be an increasingly important part of automation since there were only three options: dealing with a single vendor which was unwise because it resulted in inflexible systems, developing standards which might be accomplished in the long-term but had not yet been successful in the ADP world (though long-since developed in Commo); and bridging.

[] there would be 35 million users of terminals whose unit cost would be \$2,000 by 1990 and that most organizations would pass through three stages: automating their manual systems, enhancing the effectiveness of their systems, and finally doing the presently unknowable. According to Haeckel, the factors inhibiting automation were extreme complexity, doubts about security and productivity, public policy and regulations, lack of standards, user "unfriendliness," and the unknown impact on society.

18. [] then briefly outlined the status of the BIoSTAR project, stating that OD&E would develop an engineering model and had hired an independent contractor to study the potential for industrial development of optical disk technology by the late 1980s. Once those studies have been completed, he noted, he would brief the Board to get a decision on whether or not the Agency should invest resources to develop this technology. He also commented that he had briefed the Community's Information Handling Committee on BIoSTAR.

19. Mr. Briggs then adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 25 May, at 1430 hours in Room 7D64. The Artificial Intelligence Applications Working Group will brief the Board on their initial report on the future of artificial intelligence at CIA.

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